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rance, and not from our disrespect for them. Of course among the masses woman is looked upon pretty nearly in the same way as she is here, but among the better classes she sways the home. Is it possible that, in a society which is known to have been civilized from very old times, woman could be disrespected? Can a son disrespect his mother? If not, how can we Hindoos and Moslems be thought to be guilty of such an atrocious offence against humanity?

MUHAMMAD ABDUL GHANI.

LONDON.

THE RELIGIOUS TRAINING OF CHILDREN.

THE struggle between the mechanical and spiritual views of the universe, carried on in one guise or another since men first became capable of coherent thought, is not now, and perhaps in the very nature of things can never be, definitely settled. It is, however, not less important here than elsewhere that the contestants should not be encumbered by their baggage. To save the main position, moreover, is more necessary than to keep possession of the outposts. Unfortunately, it has been left for philosophy to make an unpartisan stand for the spiritual interpretation of life. Too often religion, whose existence is staked on the same conflict, has contented itself with watching narrowly some special point which would soon prove untenable and worthless if the main battle went against it.

I propose now to consider religious education in the broadest light as an educational and philosophical, not a theological question. I regard the wakening and cultivation of the religious spirit as the important task, the critical task, and, alas, the neglected task. I shall not attempt, therefore, to outline a policy immediately applicable to any specific conditions. I shall not even consider the question of supplementing or modifying my argument or conclusion so as to adapt either or both to the requirements of any particular form of religious belief or worship. As far as practicable, I shall ignore racial

and historical connections, and leave it to subsequent consideration to determine how these omitted facts ought to influence the interpretation and application of such truths as I may succeed in laying bare.

The vagueness of this undertaking may appear to some to render it useless; but I cannot help thinking that, in these days of strong materialistic leaning, it behooves us, first of all, to secure the spiritual hold; and of that, except in so far as its security is supposed to be necessarily involved in the maintenance of special religious forms, almost no one seems to be thinking.

It may seem on its face absurd to discuss the question of religious training from any but a sectarian stand-point; but I am persuaded that, waiving the reason already assigned, there is no more useful exercise than the process of depolarizing the mind and viewing great issues in a more or less independent fashion, freed from the restrictions and conditions with which practical necessities hamper us. The free play of thought about serious problems cannot but lead to a broader and truer treatment in the actual conditions under which these difficulties require to be met. Moreover, consideration of this kind is apt to lead men to reflect on the infinitely various nature of truth, and to be tolerant of and sympathetic with ideas and ideals that they themselves reject.

The genuine religious sense is very loosely associated nowadays with external religious expression. It may exist strongly in men who have no manifest religious connection; very often, as the world knows, it does not exist at all where religious associations are most prominent. But if religious feeling is significant, either in the present or in some subsequent phase of existence, then I think its cultivation as a thing to be desired in itself well deserves our attention.

Religious instruction may be viewed from the stand-point either of the church or of the child. From the stand-point of the church it is based on the assumed necessity of maintaining institutional continuity. Those who argue in behalf of the absolute verity of a particular revelation of dogma, and those who merely believe impressiveness and efficacy depend largely

on the preservation and transmission of the historical form, practically agree, though for very different reasons, on the course to be pursued. The main effort of this course is to secure, in advance of its own judgment and experience, the allegiance and service of the growing child. But, as in the end this relation is designed simply to promote and assure what the church conceives to be the soul's welfare, and is defended solely on that ground, the former of the two stand-points may be allowed to merge into the latter,—that of the child.

Critically examined, then, from this stand-point, our religious instruction is obviously restrictive in its aim and effect, and is thus related to a social conception now obsolete. According to this discarded mediæval doctrine,—discarded, not indeed because absolutely false, but because its possibilities of usefulness are gone,—society, combining church and state, was directly responsible for the spiritual as well as the temporal welfare of its member. The halo which wrapped in mystery its origin and nature rendered this pretension for centuries practically unassailable. Persuaded, then, that the sanction of God approved its purpose and ideals, the mediæval state was thus bound to insist on their acceptance. Hence so-called religious intolerance, arising, in the first place, because circumstances forced society to believe itself charged to secure the individual's salvation, and because salvation was necessarily conceived to attach to a particular form of action and belief.

The religious school has never escaped this idea. To this day it maintains the ancient manner; it still aims at inculcating a special form as if with supernatural sanction; it still aims at fixing the child in a definite attitude, as if some special validity belonged to that. Though the separation of the church and state has destroyed the absolute despotism of a single idea, it has substituted what is perhaps in this respect little better,—the despotism of many petty princes, each seeking to be absolute in his own domain. This, I contend, is merely the recurrence of the mediæval idea of salvation by special form. The child's religious training is made to con-

form to the limitations of an historical product. Admittedly, every phase of religious practice now existing is the complicated result of political, ethical, scientific, philosophical action and interaction. Centuries of contest have sharply defined and accentuated both outline and feature in these organic products. The letter, therefore, rather than the spirit, necessarily stands out in every instance as the distinctive mark, as the significant and efficient fact. Whatever our own theory and belief, these involved social products continue to be made, in altogether uncritical fashion, the vehicle—nay, the substance—of religious instruction; because, forsooth, each of them has been supposed at one time or another to hold the key to heaven.

We have outgrown this superstition. We no longer believe in a monopoly of truth. We recognize in every religious organization, as in every philosophical scheme, some glimpse of a reality that all are inadequate to express. We have ceased to attach essential importance to form. The idea of salvation has been spiritualized. We seek no bargains with the Almighty; we hope for no special favors. We dedicate our living powers not to the sordid task of winning an agreeable hereafter, but to the splendid opportunities and demands of the abiding present. Another and higher ideal has replaced the selfish faith of mediævalism. Plainly, then, the theory and method of religious training, as now conducted, involves us in grave inconsistency.

I have said that the necessity of self-preservation in slowly crystallizing communities is at bottom responsible for our inherited educational spirit and method. Although fiercely assailed now and then by the loud batteries of Socialism and Anarchy, the social instinct is now comparatively certain. It behooves us, therefore, to bring our educational theory into harmony with a changed social order, behind which it has indisputably lagged.

The bulk of our inheritance from the past is obviously unconscious, and, perhaps fortunately for us, unavoidable. In the somewhat narrow range of possible choice, it is assuredly not easy to define the exact limits within which we should

consciously attempt to devolve upon our heirs the complex network of ideas and feelings that make up our moral and social life. The problem is not simplified by the condition that the inheritance is to be regarded merely as tentative, pending the time when the inheriting individual can critically review the basis of his faith and conduct. Under the most favorable circumstances, well-nigh a third of his life will have been moulded by assumptions that are now granted to have been but provisional; and by no legerdemain can he again occupy an impartial attitude towards that which has thus been bred in the bone.

While, therefore, we must avoid narrowly binding a child to its environment, education is, on the other hand, compelled to contemplate a concrete problem: we cannot educate in the air, with a view thus to equip the child for every possible contingency. There is no such thing as education in the abstract; it must, in the case of every child, be a practical, concrete, and definite policy. Thus, although ignorance is fatally and most narrowly restrictive in its effects on mind and character, almost necessarily forbidding the formation of new relations or the opening of new paths of social activity, culture is itself to some extent restrictive also, though in a different way and for a different reason.

But ethics, no less than practical wisdom, has something to say on the question of educational procedure. On the side of dogma and theory—I omit for the moment the question of conduct—religious instruction, as now carried on, tends strongly to fix prejudice and to barricade the mind against alien influences by a powerful rampart of fears, phrases, and ill-digested theological ideas. If an attempt were made to wrench the child's physical development in any such arbitrary manner, it would be denounced and prohibited as barbarous. It is no reply to say that the course of physical development is fixed, and any violation of it is immediately recognized as baneful. As a matter of fact, it is fixed only as regards the framework of the body. Nature looks after this. Beyond this, our own efforts must supply and maintain the conditions and materials required for healthy growth. The analogy to

mental development may, on further thought, prove closer than was suspected at first sight. It is therefore certainly worth asking, Is not this attempt rigidly to fix the child's attitude a fatal and unjustifiable invasion of its individuality?

I am, however, very far from urging the other extreme,—educational *laissez faire*. I am simply seeking for a line of cleavage,—a principle which may guide us rationally in a very complicated and difficult problem; and *laissez faire* it certainly is not. This would be comparable to the ostrich's hiding his head in order to escape being seen. We do not avoid danger or stumble upon wisdom by merely closing our eyes. Letting the child alone means simply that you are letting him alone. You deprive him of the guidance of those most deeply concerned, and leave him to the guidance of arbitrary chance. The place of intelligent direction is abandoned to capricious accident. Who shall say what twist the curious, inquiring spirit may be given, while you are industriously and consciously letting it alone? What friend, what book, what chance influence in the air may accidentally direct the mind which you hoped might naturally grow? *Laissez faire*, to be brief, is a possible principle of action only in a perfect world.

We seem now to have effectually deprived ourselves of every possible principle of action. Practical wisdom and ethical injunction condemn the Procrustean bed, on the one hand, and the absence of effective guidance, on the other. Does this actually hand us over to mere caprice?

At the outset I conceded that the educational programme which has proven too narrow for our present purpose originated under the stress of social need. Education, be it remembered, is essentially a social, not an individual process. It contemplates, indeed, a particular end; but that end is the preparation of the child for an active career in a given social environment. There is, then, no such thing as an ideal educational programme, other than one appropriate to ideal social conditions, and for that very reason appropriate to no other. "The necessities of society determine the educational stress." Not culture, nor knowledge, nor symmetrical de-

velopment of so-called faculties, nor indeed any other single thing furnishes the educator's goal ; but the political, moral, commercial plexus constituting the life of the community in which we live,—these must furnish not only the educational material, but the educational end. The child, in a word, must be trained through the medium of its actual experience, in the broadest sense of the term, to comprehend and master the world in which he acts. There is no other effective way of introducing him into the varied activity of this world than by following out, defining, expanding, systematizing the multitude of vague and disorderly ideas, impressions, feelings, and wishes that constitute his soul-life.

At a time when slavery, feudalism, militarism were beneficent institutions, education was primarily restrictive. But now that these restrictions have lost their justification, now that the centrifugal human units have learned their elementary social lesson, now that moral quality suffices to maintain social integrity, education must expand to larger freedom.

It is, then, for life in democratic conditions that the child is to be equipped and fitted,—democratic not only in the narrow political and social, but likewise in the intellectual connotation of the term ; for a world in which, before the maturity of his mind and character, he may be required to enter into the mad struggle for a livelihood ; for a world in which every bar has been let down, and every field of usefulness is a scramble for precedence ; for a world in which the sanctions of custom and the influence of traditional example sit all too lightly ; for a world in which every variety of doubt, denial, and irreverence, every species of destructive and constructive ethical, religious, and philosophic opinion assails unceasingly the growing mind ; for a world in which, contradictory as it may seem, all this turbulent and passionate effort is seeking, however blindly, to establish in our life the love of truth and the love of law. As freedom is the striking characteristic of this period, so freedom is bound to be the striking characteristic of the educational endeavor,—freedom, and not restriction, and by freedom the child must be educated to freedom.

It is perhaps needless to point out that by freedom we do not mean license or caprice, but rather orderliness, rationality, the conquest of impetuous impulse, the supremacy of moral law. Strength of character and suppleness of mind seem to be the surest means of effectually meeting the demands of modern civilization. Neither the one nor the other can be contributed to or helped by catchword or formula. If education is to advance the formative, as opposed to the disintegrating tendencies discernible in our civilization; if sound moral, religious, and spiritual sense is to triumph over the disorganizing forces of materialism and anarchy, instruction must give up its attempt to protect by isolation and restriction, and must from the start prepare the child to pursue a rational course amidst the distracting influences and tendencies to which it will soon be pitilessly exposed. In politics, for instance, instead of trying to fix in the child's mind a party prepossession, which is all too likely to break down in the end and perhaps endanger civic faith and virtue, wisdom bids us to educate the political instinct, develop the sense of political responsibility. So in religion, instead of fixing the narrowest possible religious allegiance,—to a dissenting faction, indeed, rather than to a general Church,—an allegiance which is more and more likely to fail and involve in its ruin all religious affiliation whatever, how much wiser to look after the religious sense, which will endure, without a more limited religious connection, and will make for character perhaps more than any other imaginable influence.

I believe, then, that our religious instruction must be completely revised in both its aim and method. For the narrow aim with which it now works must be substituted the broader one required by present conditions,—first of all, the development of the moral and religious sense as of transcendent importance. I speak of the religious sense, it will be observed, rather than of religion as a definitely elaborated body of doctrine and practice,—a sense that must be common to all creeds and churches,—the common well-spring of all sincere and active religious life whatsoever. It is not easy to define precisely what is, perhaps, at best, a state—a hue—a shade of

thought and feeling, rather than a distinctly conceivable idea. Neither morality nor philosophy nor cosmogony alone suffices. The religious sense knows these things in more or less definite terms, but it both feels and knows more than they. Perhaps, if we pause to analyze the purest and most disinterested piety, the spontaneous and unreflecting type of a bygone day, we shall find the religious instinct, vague though it be, locating the soul in time and space. Deprive the soul of this support, and it is lost. It is the strength and certainty of religious feeling, not the definite promise of a creed, that ballasts the pious in the weltering sea, keeps them true to rudder and pilot, forbids despair. It is not because they understand the why and wherefore, the whence and whither of things, but because their religious or spiritual sense steadies them, fixes them, seems to confer unity of plan on what would otherwise be an unaccountable and disjoined series of accidents. The religious sense is, then, essentially the principle of unity, if we may speak so precisely, without which we are lost in this world of time and matter; and it is towards the awakening of this sense of spiritual unity, beneath the changing aspects of phenomenal life, that religious education must first of all strive. Certainly such religious education cannot be deemed antagonistic to any religious organization or profession; it would be a curious implication of weakness, should any denomination fear religiosity as such.

Side by side with this altered purpose must come change of method. We are even now on the threshold of a profound and significant change in the art of education. Under the influence of Herbart and others, the point of emphasis in education is shifting from the subjects of study to the student, to the child. It still goes without saying, in most schools and with most teachers, that the pedagogical treatment of a topic necessarily follows its natural, logical, or chronological development. Our text-books in every subject—history, geography, arithmetic, grammar, science—are built upon this assumption. Each presents, with a degree of thoroughness and completeness supposedly adapted to the age of the pupil, the coherent, systematic, logical unfolding of its chosen subject. The eye

of the author in these cases has been primarily fixed upon the matter in hand, and only secondarily, and as a guide in settling upon the degree of difficulty to be admitted, upon the child. Text-books have, in a word, been compiled by grammarians, mathematicians, geographers,—though but rarely have these been experts at first hand; it is but recently that we have come to know that the real authority and guide in these matters must be the psychologist,—the student of child-life,—though not the amateur student of child-life, now so much in evidence.

As the Herbartian idea in its most general form is destined to modify existing secular education profoundly, it occurs to me to be worth asking whether, in the sphere of religious instruction, it may not have a field as well. In the experimental German schools now operating the elaborate programmes of Ziller and Frick, the religious instruction of the daily school has been remodelled to conform to the Herbartian scheme. I dare say, in the fields of ethics and sacred history, we might profit by the suggestions of these curricula; but the conditions are, nevertheless, so totally different that, practically, we must ourselves settle our main difficulties before the experience of German schools will avail.

The criticism already passed upon the daily school—that its course of study, its text-books, its methods, are, in the first place, constructed by architects who had very little concern for and absolutely no adequate knowledge of the human child—seems to me to weigh with equal severity against the religious school. I make no distinction here between Christian and Jew. As far as my observation goes, religious spirit and the knowledge of religious history are distributed between them with absolute impartiality. In both cases the religious school is organized—though loosely organized, it is true—by theologians, and on a theological basis. The things that the child of a given denomination ought to know, not the knowers themselves, have dictated the course to be pursued and the divisions into which it has fallen. It is what children ought presumably to know—the concrete, presentable, although entirely unassimilable bullets of historical and

theological lore—that are, if not the sole, certainly the main objects of attention. And, to make matters worse, the teaching of this artificial scheme, based, in the first place, on an unsound notion, is intrusted to immature and unpractised young men and women, whose effort is even more rigidly and exclusively directed to the modicum to be drilled into the unresponsive child.

Such a method is bound to be vicious in its effects. If, on the one hand, the child be impressionable, who can express the dumb anguish to which it is doomed by the literal interpretation of its religious lesson? Witness the heartbreak of Waldo in the “Story of an African Farm.” “Surely,” says George Eliot, “if we could recall that early bitterness, the strangely perspectiveless conception of life that gave the bitterness its intensity, we should not pooh-pooh the griefs of our children.”

But if, on the other hand, the child is not easily susceptible, its religious consciousness is quite awakened. It is in nowise prepared to resist the materializing tendencies which the welfare of society requires to be combated. Its feeble equipment of phrases tends rather to confirm the irreligious wave, for, certainly, if this be religion, it is a hollow, verbal mockery.

The religious school thus becomes the fruitful mother of indifference. The disintegration of the religious consciousness is assisted by the very influences that should fortify and maintain it.

I have been aided towards these conclusions by the experience of thoughtful men and women with whom I have been able to discuss the question. I have tried, as far as I could be permitted, to learn their religious history without previous suggestion of my own view. In one case I have been favored with a striking account of individual experience, which exposes so fully, and at the same time so sympathetically, the defects that I have tried to point out, that I am happy to be allowed to quote freely from it,—

“I was always taken, or rather sent, to Sunday-school from the very first, except for the three or four years we lived in the mountains. I haven’t any recollection one way or the other of my first Sunday-school, except as a vague

and pleasurable excitement connected with the learning of many texts and with seeing a great many children in their best clothes; I believe there was absolutely no real feeling connected with it then. Later I remember only my teachers and the way they impressed me,—very little of their teaching; not enough to know whether it was ethical, dogmatical, or historical; very little of the latter, I fancy, for I had almost no conception of the historical side of the Bible until I went to college. There was a good deal of the tamely ethical, adapted to children; but I think what Sunday-school really stood for was a place where it was eminently proper to go, and where it was worth while to know one's lessons, because it was appreciated and generally figured as a shining exception. It was not until I went into Miss X's class that religious teaching really began to take hold of me, and then chiefly, I fancy, because I was so closely attached to her and liked to do and feel as I knew she wished me to. I got, as time went on, more or less bias towards my parents' church as the church; but I really believe now that my joining it was through a child's fondness of imitating its elders in thought and belief, for I know that the first time I ever went to an Episcopal church I knew down in the bottom of my heart that that was what I really preferred and should have taken to, if I had been left alone,—had had nothing to contend with in doing so, I mean. The beauty and dignity of the service filled a need somewhere that the church I was used to left quite unsatisfied. Next I had a long period of what Sunday-school books call religious fervor, when I went to church and Sunday-school devoutly, and then I got heartily sick of it all. There was so little of it. Nothing but ceaseless repetitions in all keys and guises, but the same thing at the bottom. It was barren and uninteresting, and I hate to remember even now all the sermons I sat through and the lessons I studied, bored almost beyond endurance, and hungry for anything but the same thing over and over again. That is the way the average Sunday-school strikes me, then,—as a cheap, inadequate, and often stultifying solution of the most delicate and difficult problem in the world,—the unfolding of a child's mind. There is an even greater temptation there than in ordinary schools for the inefficiency and ignorance to shelter themselves behind catchwords, iteration, and surface dogmatism. The teachers have taken things for granted themselves, and they can only urge others to do the same. And as for some of the by-products in the way of influence, where the teachers are not like Miss X, and the frequent cheapening and vulgarizing of sacred things,—well, these might be made the subject of a philippic."

The details of a course of religious instruction such as would satisfy the criticism here made, I cannot now submit. It demands, in the first place, properly equipped teachers,—teachers with a knowledge of infant psychology, with active and true religious feeling, and, lastly, with adequate store of religious learning. Even granted that these can be obtained,—I, for one, do not see how or where,—it would require years of experimentation to arrive at an acceptable result. Some

things, however, experience in other lines suggests. Instead of checking by rude suppression or satisfying with meaningless verbal formulæ the child's eager curiosity, which would naturally issue in religious feeling, a wise teacher will sustain and heighten the child's wonder; as an unsolved mystery, he will keep before the child-mind the sense of goodness, beauty, power revealing itself gradually, but always more and more as the child's power to grasp it unfolds. It is a woful mistake to suppose that a child's questions must always be categorically answered. Often the question reflects no distinctly apprehended problem, but rather a vague, incomprehensible wonder and awe. The management of the child-mind at this stage calls for the utmost delicacy, tact, sympathy. At times we must needs explain; again we must confess ignorance; and yet again we must gently postpone. Here, as elsewhere, it is the religious bent that we must preserve and encourage, without trying too narrowly to impart a special religious content.

Assuming that the Bible will continue to a large extent the source of religious education, its chronological and theological treatment must be abandoned. The child apperceives by means of previous experience; hence its material must be selected and presented according to conditions fixed beforehand by the content of the child's experience. The parables of the New Testament are constructed with consummate skill on this principle. This forbids once for all rigid and absolute teaching of special stories and incidents. The child's hold on both facts and interpretation must be gentle, as is its hold on its knowledge and understanding of other matters. Who would hammer into its young brain an account, for example, of the growth of a tree, and then try to keep it from revising this teaching by surrounding the revision with pain and penalty? On the contrary, we satisfy its inquiry about ordinary phenomena in such a way as to perpetuate interest and encourage revision; similarly it must be with the Bible story. The matter must offer no undue resistance to the reinterpretation and revision to which the child's whole stock of ideas is constantly subjected by its developing mind and in connection with its expanding knowledge, which thus grows in mass,

definiteness, orderliness, suggestiveness, and becomes a vital part of the soul, not a mere foreign, inactive encumbrance. It is in this sense that ideas give ideals and knowledge becomes a real power.

To the scheme here proposed it will perhaps be objected that I mean to bring children in contact only with philosophically sanctioned spiritual ideas. In answer I need only point out that this cannot be my intention, as it violates fatally the psychological principle. They must have the conceptions proper to their age and mental state,—crudely anthropomorphic at the start, as must be. But the point is that no one conception must be rigidly insisted on as absolutely valid and necessary either in the past or present. Growth out of anthropomorphism into higher and more spiritual forms must not only be unhindered, but must be skilfully promoted. Doubt, instead of being repressed, must become a means of advancing spirituality.

Again, it may be urged that children will outgrow their early training,—their own vitality may be relied on. This fundamental error of our present teaching is, as I have already contended, really largely responsible for irreligion, atheism, and agnosticism. In childhood the religious sense was not touched, but the mind was filled with raw religious ideas. As their inadequacy was perceived, they were unloaded, and there was no active religious consciousness behind to supply the loss. The educational process, I repeat, must be organic,—connected; an educational policy that contemplates from the start a more or less abrupt break with the past at some future stage is totally opposed to the law of mental and spiritual development. From such a catastrophe a few escape with their spiritual lives; the multitude never recover from the shock.

The religious school, as I have considered it, has an importance far beyond what its present meagre allowance of attention assumes. I regard it, indeed, as a most positive misfortune that existing conditions make it impossible to unite religious with secular training, for its scope, practical and theoretical, is wide and essential. By opening up the child's

view to the wonder, beauty, and order of the visible universe, by bringing him to feel the potential greatness and nobility of man, and at the same time the limitations and dependence attendant on his finitude, the religious school can lay the foundation of a true religious life. Surely the highest powers of the human soul meet in that transcendent mood where science and ethics and philosophy, music, art, and poetry fuse to form the developed religious consciousness. And this developed religious consciousness, as I have tried to show, must be the main bulwark of humanity against the forces that threaten the disruption of society, for the supreme fact of the religious sense is spiritual unity. The practical difficulties in the way of the cultivation of this sense are indisputably great; but for that very reason it behooves us steadfastly to look away from the letter, steadfastly to fix our attention on the spirit.

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LAW AND NATURE IN GREEK ETHICS.

IN a well-known passage of the "Ethics," Aristotle says that "things fair and things just are liable to such variation and fluctuation that they are believed to exist by law only and not by nature."* Although much has been written, and well written, on this distinction, it still seems possible to throw a little fresh light upon it. It is easier now than it used to be to trace the thread of historical continuity in Greek thought, and to understand what the doctrines of Greek philosophers really meant to the men who taught them and heard them. And we can do this by looking at our problem in the twofold light of earlier speculation and contemporary culture.

I. To understand what the Greeks of the fifth century B.C. meant by *φύσις*,—a word very inadequately rendered by

* *Eth. Nic. A*, 1094 b, 14, τὰ δὲ καλὰ καὶ τὰ δίκαια . . . πολλὰν ἔχει διαφορὰν καὶ πλάνην, ὥστε δοκεῖν νόμῳ μόνον εἶναι, φύσει δὲ μή.